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# UNDERSTANDING IS HAPPINESS

*Second Impression*

George S. Arundale




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*Our Campaign for Understanding brings to its fulfilment the powerful aid of the strength of Friendship, the splendour of Freedom, and the science of noble living—Theosophy.*

## PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN

THIS Campaign for Understanding is different from those which have preceded it. The "Straight Theosophy" Campaign and "There Is a Plan" Campaign were suggestions for courses of study and lectures. In each case there was an elaborate chart of study and lecture which, it was hoped, might form a basis on which individual Lodges might arrange intensive programmes.

These two earlier Campaigns offered material ready-made for immediate use. But the Campaign for Understanding is otherwise constructed.

I desire the material offered in this Campaign to arouse in members their own Understanding and the means whereby it may be made creative.

I do not wish that the thoughts on Understanding set forth in the various pamphlets should be used just as they are, nor that they should necessarily form material for lectures and activity. They should be used as probes whereby may be aroused both individual self-understanding and those two types of

Understanding which are so necessary for the helping of the world—sympathetic and appreciative Understanding, which takes the individual or collection of individuals just as he or they are. And the more creative, positive and constructive Understanding, which very largely intuits the nature of the next step to be taken on the way of unfoldment and works so that such next step may be taken with as little delay as possible.

In the pamphlets which constitute this Campaign my own present principles and methods of Understanding are largely set forth, partly for the reason that in our Theosophical literature there is practically no specific treatment at all with regard to Theosophy as Understanding, though the whole Science of Theosophy is the Science of Understanding and, of course, much more.

I am, therefore, all the more anxious that these principles and methods should serve only as stimulants to the intensification of Understanding in its various aspects among my fellow-members. We need for a Campaign for Understanding many different and

widely divergent types of Understanding, and every member should contribute his own Understanding to the Campaign, and certainly not mine, which is submitted only as a suggestion.

It would be a good plan if every member would read sentence after sentence—for the most part they have been deliberately made short to this end—and explore carefully his own reaction to each ; so that he may construct his own sentence, his own thought, either to take the place of mine, being perhaps radically in opposition, or to be modificatory or amplificatory, according to the dictates of his own individual and unique genius in Understanding.

Hence, every sentence in these pamphlets is designed to be provocatory, to be the means of evoking each member's own individual, and possibly utterly different, Understanding. If we are to have an effective Campaign for Understanding, it must be a Campaign composed of innumerable and different Understandings, a very rainbow of Understandings, and not just an intensification of my own particular

colour. It will take all manner of Understandings to help the world to escape from its present prison of misunderstandings ; and this particular Campaign is far more directed to remind members of their own powers of Understanding, and in these days of misunderstanding to make effective use of them, than to lay down as if authoritative certain specific principles and practices.

Indeed, I want to emphasize once more the fact that I have sought in all these pamphlets to be provocative, stimulative, challenging, even, if you will understand me, irritating (I would almost dare to remind you of the origin of cultured pearls), and certainly not dictatorial, as if everybody must have exactly the same principles and practices as my own. God forbid !

Therefore, please use these pamphlets not as syllabuses for lectures, but as bases, if you will, for study, discussion and self-probing, so that your own Understanding may shine more brightly than before and shed its light, its own individual and unique

light, in the dark places which are around you.

The whole world, every race, nation, faith, and every individual in it, urgently needs *your* Understanding—both in its sympathetic aspect and as driving power. With your Theosophy you are sure to understand wisely and therefore helpfully. So let Understanding be one of your greater gifts to your world during these difficult yet marvellously hopeful times.

Where is your Nation or your Faith, or any department of the life of your country, divided against itself ?

Into such divisions let our Campaign for Understanding enter.

Where is there division, of whatever nature, as, for example, a sense of superiority, between your Nation, or your Faith, and another Nation, or another Faith ?

Into such division let our Campaign for Understanding enter.

Where is there dis-ease in your own individual life, in whatever department,

or between yourself and those who live their lives near to your own ?

Into such dis-ease let our Campaign for Understanding enter.

Our Campaign for Understanding brings to its fulfilment the powerful aid of the strength of Friendship, the spirit of Freedom, and of the science of splendid living—Theosophy.

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**Understanding waters the Seed of Peace to its Fulfilment in the Flower of Happiness.**

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CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# TOWARDS A GOLDEN AGE

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*Our world is the Rainbow —the Good in many forms, the Beautiful in many forms, the True in many forms, the White Eternal Light in a myriad glorious colours.*

## TOWARDS A GOLDEN AGE

THIS Campaign, the third of the series —the other two being for the emphasis on Straight Theosophy and on the fact that There Is A Plan underlying the apparent confusions and uncertainties of growth—is *not* a Campaign to propagate certain opinions or beliefs, to seek to induce people to become converted to such opinions and beliefs. It is *not* a Campaign to establish agreement. It is a Campaign to promote a wise and appreciative Understanding of other people's modes of living, without any implication of endorsement. It is also a Campaign to promote friendly relationships between differences, be these of race, of nationality, of faith, of custom, of opinion and conviction, of kingdom of nature. Indeed, the Campaign might have as its slogan :

FRIENDSHIP AMIDST DIFFERENCES

For the Campaign depends upon the axiom that LIFE IS ONE, be its expressions ever so diverse, that in the phrase THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN there is one of

the profoundest of Truths, define we the word "God" as we will.

The Campaign takes differences for granted, and by no means seeks to abolish them. But it is designed to exalt the gold in every difference, and to make clear that while dross must needs be everywhere—no less in the differences which we ourselves express than in the differences for which others stand, gold is no less everywhere, too.

In this age and time there is a tendency to be blind to the gold in those around us, but to be fanatically alive to the gold in ourselves and in those who shine with the same colour as ourselves in the Rainbow of Life.

Dross is everywhere. Gold is everywhere. The Campaign for Understanding is to help all to perceive Gold everywhere, to help all to become increasingly Gold-conscious, both as regards themselves and in respect of all others too, of whatever kingdom of nature.

In every individual there is Gold. In every creature there is Gold. In every race there is Gold, be its colour what

it may. In every nation there is Gold. In every faith there is Gold.

All Life is Gold-to-be, and dross is but Gold in its becoming.

The Campaign for Understanding is to help this age of ours to become

A Golden Age

for such it may be, as have other ages been before it, if we but make it so. And we can make it so if we will seek everywhere, and find everywhere, the Good, the Beautiful, the True. Perchance somewhere there may be One Good, One Beauty, One Truth, as there is somewhere the One Light.

But our world is the Rainbow—the Good in many forms, the Beautiful in many forms, the True in many forms, the White Eternal Light in a myriad glorious colours. Our world is a world of differences—a world of stars, Sundrops, and in each star we have to learn to perceive the Sun in which it and all its brethren live and move and have their being.

Yet is the Campaign for Understanding not merely that we may

understand others. How shall we learn to understand others unless we are also learning

TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES

—our own star-natures and modes of Sun-reflection.

It is for this reason that two Campaigns have endeavoured to prepare for this further Campaign. The less we really know ourselves, the less can we know others ; for Understanding, if it is to spread abroad, must begin at home. Those individuals who understand themselves least are most critical and condemnatory of those around them. Those nations which understand themselves least are the very nations which are most aggressive and proud. Those races are most proud which understand their own natures least.

The truest follower of a faith is not the most narrow-minded member, but the individual who, while cherishing deeply the glories of his own religion, is thereby able to perceive the glories of the faiths of others.

The individual who has begun to understand himself is eager, not to

convert others to himself and to all for which he stands, but to help others to self-conversion, so that they may learn to know themselves, to understand themselves. He says to others : Make your Rainbow-colour glorious ! He does not say : Change your Rainbow-colour to mine.

We must, therefore, begin with

SELF-UNDERSTANDING

with the understanding of the assets and liabilities, the sunshine and the shadows, of our own particular differences which make us all that we are ; and from the understanding of our own nature we proceed to the understanding of the natures around us, in whatever shape or form.

Understanding, especially when it is the understanding of ourselves, involves challenge and criticism. We have to learn to be as frank with ourselves as we are frank, in opinion though often not in utterance, about others and their varied modes of difference. The more impersonal we are able to become in relation to ourselves, the more beautiful and finely individual

will our personalities themselves become. The salt of impersonality is essential to the health of the personality. And the more impersonal we can become with regard to others—our criticisms of others are so strongly tinged with our own personalities—the more shall we be able to help, and the more we shall appreciate.

Thus is it that this Campaign for Understanding is *ipso facto*

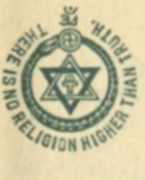
A CAMPAIGN FOR WISER SERVICE

for as understanding grows the spirit of service becomes stimulated.

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**The Fuel of Understanding Feeds the Fire of Goodwill**

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CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# THE LAWS OF UNDERSTANDING

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*The first Law of Understanding is that in general the same hopes, sorrows, joys, troubles, fears, encompass us all. The same Destiny beckons us. The same Love enfolds us. The same Justice educates us.*

## THE LAWS OF UNDERSTANDING

1. The first Law of Understanding is that in general the same hopes, sorrows, joys, troubles, fears, encompass us all. The same Destiny beckons us. The same Love enfolds us. The same Justice educates us.

We belong to different races, nationalities, faiths, communities. But we share the same life. Differences are but differences of emphasis on the myriad circumstances which minister to the universal growing.

In terms of time we seem radically different, even diametrically opposed. Yet in terms of the Eternal our very differences are reflections of the One Life as it displays its rainbow glories. Individuals, communities, nations, faiths, races, are but the Unity arrayed in multiform exaltation.

Understanding remembers the One amidst the many, perceives the One amidst the many, recognizes diversity as a symbol of the glory of the One.

2. The second Law of Understanding is that each living creature

—superhuman, human, sub-human—through his own individual circumstances, of personality in terms of physical, emotional, mental and higher consciousness, in terms of his nationality, in terms of his faith, in terms of his race, in terms of his environment, is unfolding his being to its perfection.

Movement everywhere is unceasing, though not necessarily regular or equal. This unfoldment, this movement onwards and upwards, is a universal quality inherent in all life. And as the great White Light burst forth into countless diversities, so as time passes do these diversities return homewards, enriching with their experience the Light which sent them forth.

Life, ascending, reaches manhood. Man, ascending, reaches supermanhood.

Today man is here. Tomorrow he is there. The day after he is elsewhere. Some day he will be everywhere. The man of Understanding is beginning to be everywhere.

3. The third Law of Understanding is that difference does not normally

imply superiority and inferiority—be such difference what it may: colour, creed, caste, nationality, race, social or other status.

Ordinarily, most differences in the human kingdom, at all events among the semi-civilized peoples who regard themselves as in the vanguard of civilization as it exists today, are on the same level of development. There is little to choose between them, even though each individual who is possessed by a difference (he has not yet learned to possess it) is certain that the particular differences which characterize him render him superior to those whose differences are other than his own.

Yet this very sense of superiority has its power and purpose in the evolutionary process. Until through the wisdom of experience we are able to enter into the peace of knowing our place in Life's hierarchical order, the pendulum of our being must needs swing between the complex of superiority and that of inferiority—the former being the product of the ignorance of pride, the latter of the ignorance of

fear. Until we can be at rest we must oscillate.

But the Campaign for Understanding is in part to help us to cause a sense of Equality to take the place both of superiority and inferiority, so that we may regard as fellow-travellers on the same road members of every faith, every nationality, every race, however much we cherish our own differences above all others—FOR OURSELVES, as the Campaign for Understanding would have us add.

The particular differences characterizing a particular individual are but one organized conglomeration among innumerable other conglomerations. Each individual naturally regards his own conglomeration as the best. Were he to add "for me," well and good. But he proceeds to think it is superior to all other conglomerations. And it is but one step further to the illustration that all other conglomerations would benefit from resolution into his. He has yet to learn that the conglomerations of others are surely best for them, since in them they find the nurture they need.

4. The fourth Law of Understanding is that misunderstanding retards growth, while Understanding accelerates growth—be the growth in terms of individuality or of collectivity.

Growth is most surely taking place when an understanding is substituted for a misunderstanding, an appreciation for a condemnation, when we are able to recognize the universality of Truth instead of labouring under the delusion of the exclusive attachment of Truth to certain particular forms.

The quickening of growth depends upon the increasing universality of consciousness. The more of that which is without us we can make part of our very being the more quickly do we travel towards our divinity. The sense of separateness and superiority is the refuge of the weak. The sense of increasing inclusiveness is the freedom of the strong.

The more each one of us can in very truth be at home in ever-widening circles of surroundings, in the different faiths of the world, in the different races and nations of the world, in the

different customs of the world, in the different modes of Life's expression in the world, the more we become increasingly vital with the world's larger life. Instead of belonging to drops of water, we belong to little pools. Instead of belonging to little pools, we belong to water-falls. Instead of belonging to water-falls, we belong to rivers. Instead of belonging to rivers, we lose and find ourselves in oceans. From the streams of separateness lead us to the Ocean of Universal Brotherhood, O Life ! in whose body the very Ocean is but a single cell.

5. **The fifth Law of Understanding is that everywhere the available best is happening, and if a better is not happening, it is because the world, or race, or nation, or faith, or individual, is still unable to achieve it.**

That which looks "bad," and doubtless may be bad, may yet be the available best, in that its very badness must sooner or later be an insistent call for the substitution of a less bad. The depression we see around us, the destitution, the apparent injustice, hatred, cruelty, the quarrellings, the

miseries—all these and innumerable other ills are the only circumstances in which we are for the moment capable of living. Were we immediately capable of living in better circumstances, and were there the urge so to live, we should at least be moving towards such better circumstances. The savage must needs live in *his* savagery. And we must needs live in ours. But the savage must sooner or later emerge from his savagery as we must emerge from ours.

6. The sixth Law of Understanding is that the available best is but a temporary halting place on the way to a better.

Evolution is the antithesis to stagnation. There is a limit to the possibility of any individual or group of individuals remaining in a "best." Any available best is but a stepping-stone to a better "available best." Wherever an individual, or group of individuals, may be, in whatever available best, there is waiting just round the corner a better, from which the law of evolution renders escape impossible. Time is given to us to grow, and to

tarry on the way of growth. But we cannot tarry forever. Our Freewill has made the attainment of Life's goal an eventual Necessity.

**7. The seventh Law of Understanding is that Love and Justice rule the world, and are expressed in the preceding six Laws.**

Shall Love and Justice rule the world in spite of us, or with our aid ? The Campaign for Understanding is that we may become fine channels for Love and Justice. Let us remember that even as we embody something less than Love, something less than Justice, Love and Justice are still ruling us, serving us, saving us. Often and often it is difficult to see how here and there, where terrible wrongs wreak their evil courses apparently unchecked, Love and Justice can still enfold both wronged and wrong-doer. Yet even into the deepest darkness the Light of Love and Justice penetrates, and weilds the mighty Law of Adjustment to render in full to the wronged the Love and Justice they have lacked, and to the wrong-doers the Love and Justicet hey need that the more quickly

they may learn the lesson taught by wrong-doing.

And you and I may be the understanding channels through which the Love and Justice of God, of Nature, of Life may shine forth.

Understanding and its Laws express in fact the Unity of Life and that stepping down of the Unity which we perceive in the world around us as expressed in the word Solidarity. Unity *is* everywhere. We cannot escape from it. We cannot nullify it. But we can, and we often do, rebel against it, and rebellion inevitably results in the problems which beset us in all departments of life. Rebellion is the cause of every ill from which the world suffers today. Rebellion is misunderstanding. Misunderstanding is dis-ease, and dis-ease brings with it the problem of cure.

Problems never arise when we obey, or rather identify ourselves with, the Law which is embodied in our very natures. But a house divided against itself, such as each one of us is when he flouts or rebels against the Law, for whatever reason, must inevitably "fall," and the fall is perceived in

terms of depression, unemployment, war, cruelty, and the problems in living to which these inevitably give rise. A problem is in very truth a house at least partly in ruins, and when there are many problems, then indeed is the house in ruins altogether. Misunderstanding is the most potent of all house-breakers, while Understanding is the most potent of all house-builders.

In any case, it should be understood that a Law of Nature is not some arbitrary regulation established outside of us, independently of us, in spite of us. It is a formula expressing a *modus operandi* of our individual natures. It expresses part of the essence of our being. It is an eternal mode of us, to which, as we become more and more attuned to the Eternal, we shall conform will-fully, for we cannot be other than ourselves—in the long run. In the short run, in terms of time, we may break the Law—it is within the Law that it should be broken, or appear to be—so that in returning to the Law we may the more recognize its Truth. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING— THE HEALER

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*When we misunderstand ourselves, then come the dangers of disease and destitution and loneliness, with all the bitterness and rebellious sense of futility which follow in the wake of these.*

## UNDERSTANDING—THE HEALER

UNDERSTANDING is Prosperity and Friendship—with all the charms and delights of life which go with these.

Misunderstanding is Depression and Ill-will—with all the sorrows and hardships which go with these.

If Understanding were everywhere, the problems of the world would be nowhere.

There is not a single problem from which the world suffers, not a single hardship or sorrow, which is not due to misunderstanding.

To misunderstand is to understand wrongly, and whenever we understand wrongly, trouble of one kind or another is the result.

Troubles, of whatever kind, are nature's danger-signals warning us that somewhere we are misunderstanding.

When we misunderstand nations and peoples, then comes the danger of war, with all the horrors that come in war's wake.

When we misunderstand faiths and sects, then comes the danger of pride and of a sense of superiority, with all the antagonisms and wrong judgments which come in the wake of these.

When we misunderstand ourselves, then come the dangers of disease and destitution and loneliness, with all the bitterness and rebellious sense of futility which follow in the wake of these.

Among the principal constituent elements of misunderstanding are self-satisfaction and pride.

All problems, all troubles, all worries, all sorrows, all disasters, are the offspring of misunderstanding. When we misunderstand, we take a wrong turning and find ourselves at the end of a blind alley.

So, whenever life seems to be going all wrong with us, it is because we are not going right with life.

Misunderstanding is going wrong with life. Understanding is going right with life.

How are we to change from misunderstanding to Understanding ?

First, by learning to recognize that all life, in whatever form of manifestation, is One.

All Life has begun at the same kind of beginning, travels on the same kind of road, is destined to achieve the same kind of goal.

In other words, Life is One in origin, One in way, One in destiny.

Second, by learning to recognize that this Oneness discloses itself to us in an infinitude of diversities. Inequality is everywhere.

But Unity is everywhere, too.

Hence the change from misunderstanding to Understanding consists in learning to perceive the One amidst the Many, the Unity amidst the Diversities : thus learning to know that other lives are exactly like our lives—*only different.*

Thus do we learn to give appreciation first place in our relations with the

lives around us, in whatever form of manifestation they may be.

We know there is in us that which is worthy of appreciation, as there is also that which justifies criticism and disapproval. We learn to know the same with regard to all other lives.

We learn to know that even though in every saint there is a sinner, yet in every sinner there is a saint no less.

So do we draw near to all other lives in that spirit of comradeship which is Understanding, and learn to let live as we ourselves live.

Suppose we are utterly convinced that our point of view, our solution for one or another of Life's problems, our own individual conception of Life's purpose, is right and final, Understanding forbids us to assume that others must needs be wrong if they do not agree with us.

We are probably right *for ourselves* at all events for the time being. Therefore, they may well be right for themselves, also for the time being.

We may be right to urge far and wide the rightness, even the finality, of our own point of view, solution, conception. They may be right to deny such rightness—at all events for themselves, as we for ourselves.

There is always misunderstanding whenever we expect other people to conform to ourselves. There is always Understanding whenever we concede to them the same freedom of conviction which we exercise for ourselves.

The course of wisdom is to speak, act, feel, think, with deepest conviction, being content with self-expression, and to have no sense of disappointment or frustration as others remain uninfluenced, unimpressed. Self-expression must never be the prelude to tyranny and coercion, nor to contempt, nor yet to a sense of futility.

Everybody is right for himself and in his own way. But each one of us needs to hold lightly even his most insistent convictions, for the time must sooner or later come, may it come sooner rather than later, when he will want to change them out of all recognition.

Understanding, therefore, comes to be Adjustment. We learn to live together, while honouring our respective differences. Mutual Adjustment is the fruit of Understanding, just as mutual antagonism is the fruit of misunderstanding.

The more we know of other lives the more we rejoice to appreciate them.

The less we know of other lives the more we find occasion for criticism and condemnation.

Let us always test the extent of our knowledge by the quality of our attitudes.

Yet let it not be forgotten that Understanding may sometimes demand restraint, coercion, opposition, even war itself—when individual or nation falls below the level so far achieved by the evolutionary process.

The level of civilization so far attained must at all costs be preserved, so that the world shall not fall back into dark ages, but by our deliberate and intentioned co-operation, and occasional disciplinary activities, shall go steadily forward to a new and greater age of Light and Understanding.




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING— THE LIGHT-BRINGER

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*He who would have understanding must seek where others do not seek, or perchance disdain to seek. He must find where others have failed to find. He must explore where others have explored in vain.*

## UNDERSTANDING—
## THE LIGHT-BRINGER

UNDERSTANDING is peace, misunderstanding is war: whether in terms of the individual, of a nation, of a faith, of a race, of business, or of any other aspect of human life.

We can be at peace with ourselves, or at war with ourselves, just as we can be at peace with others, or at war with others. All unhappiness, all sorrow, all despair, all pain, are war. War is an outward and visible sign of the eternal evolutionary conflict between Light and darkness.

Unhappiness, sorrow, despair, and all dis-ease, are darkness temporarily triumphing. Peace and happiness are Light victorious, darkness finding its reality.

In the long run Light must win, but in order to win it must suffer the children of Light to dwell awhile amidst its shadows, and to cry out that it is dark.

So do we all pass through the valleys of the shadows, themselves but reflections—if only we could understand—of

the mountains of the Light. Only those who have known the darkness can enter into the splendours of the Light.

Light is darkness sublimated, awakened into its substance. Peace and happiness are pain transfigured into power.

Misunderstanding is darkness. Understanding is Light.

Everywhere is misunderstanding rife, in all relationships of life. This is why the whole world, and every part of it, is face to face with what we call problems, which are in fact nature's beneficent reminders to us that we are in the throes of misunderstanding.

Problems are the offspring of misunderstanding, as peace and prosperity are the children of Understanding.

Problems are the danger signals of kindly nature warning us that we are living unnaturally, misunderstandingly.

All the troubles to which the individual is heir are the result of self-misunderstanding. To replace misunderstanding by understanding he must seek truth far and wide—outside

as well as within the narrow enclosures of conventionality, orthodoxy, tradition, authority, within which most people must live until the futility of misunderstanding compels them to seek the Way of Understanding.

To rest satisfied in the crowd, and in the conventions of the crowd, is to tarry among sorrow-fraught misunderstandings. To seek freedom from crowds, and from the spirit of the herd as dictatorial in thought, in feeling and emotion, and in the expression of these, is to escape from misunderstanding, and thus to know and to live.

He who would have understanding must seek where others do not seek, or perchance disdain to seek.

He must find where others have failed to find.

He must explore where others have explored in vain, or perchance have thrown away gold, misunderstanding it to be dross.

He must free himself from those ruts and grooves which are the easy modes of his normal drifting.

He must be ardently dissatisfied with himself as he challenges himself in

every detail of his daily life, knowing that a more splendid edition of himself is waiting to take the place of the present edition, as the edition of today has taken the place of the edition of yesterday.

## Right Speech

Understanding depends in part upon Right Speech.

Certain words in common use are constantly spreading an atmosphere of misunderstanding, for we do not understand their real significance.

*Death* is one such word, for we think it means separation or even annihilation.

*Hell* is another such word, for we think it postulates the existence of eternal punishment.

*God* is another such word, for we anthropomorphize Him.

*Love* is another such word, for we too often commercialize it and conceive it to be in the nature of a contract.

And there are many other words.

## Right Activity

Understanding depends in part upon Right Activity.

In many activities Understanding is flouted and set at naught.

Wherever there is *excess* there is misunderstanding.

Wherever there is *persecution* there is misunderstanding.

Wherever there is *depression*, of whatever nature, there is misunderstanding.

Wherever there is *cruelty*, in whatever form, there is misunderstanding.

These are forms of cruelty :

Vivisection, flesh-eating, killing for sport, killing for adornment, corporal chastisement, capital punishment, all forms of punishment.

There can never be any justification for cruelty, least of all in being cruel to others in order to be kind to ourselves.

Understanding is Reverence, Kindness, Compassion.

Misunderstanding is Fear, Hatred, Contempt.

Among the truly great even dislike is misunderstanding.

As all forms of Cruelty are misunderstanding, so also are all forms of Ugliness.

Ugliness is the distortion, the profaning to ignoble use, of the Good, the Beautiful, the True. It is an offence against Reverence, against Love, against Goodwill, against Compassion.

Ugly forms are cruelty to the kingdom out of the material of which they are fashioned.

Ugliness in Art is a desecration of and cruelty to Nature.

Ugly speech is cruelty to that gift of language which is God's messenger of solidarity in a divided world.

Ugly habits are offences against the forms in which life wends its way to Divinity.

Ugly relationships, as, for example, in sexual irreverence, dishonour that mutual respect which is the very heart of all noble living.

### Right Nourishment

Understanding depends in part upon Right Nourishment.

Misunderstanding is the result of malnutrition everywhere.

The physical body must be rightly nourished with pure food, never with food which, being tainted with suffering and thus pain-wrought, communicates pain.

The feelings and emotions must be rightly nourished with Reverence, Goodwill, Compassion, the Love of the Beautiful, and Aspiration towards the True.

The emotions are potent feeders either of Understanding or of misunderstanding, according to their nature.

These promote Understanding, for they are the emotions of Attraction :

*Reverence. Affection. Goodwill. Compassion.*

These promote misunderstanding, for they are the emotions of Repulsion :

*Fear. Anger. Hatred. Scorn. Jealousy. Violence.*

The mind must be rightly nourished with the Spirit of Law, of Order, of Purpose.

So shall misunderstanding grow less, and Understanding begin to enfold the

earth in goodwill. For where there are Right Speech, Right Activity and Right Nourishment, there will be Right Relationship.

## Right Search

The spirit of the seeker of Understanding is the spirit of an adventurer, of an explorer who counts no danger where discovery can be achieved, of whatever nature, however contradictory of present experience.

He seeks to *understand*, to know what is to be known, and the more he can acquire knowledge modificatory of his present experience the happier he is.

Under no circumstances does he seek to measure all things in the standard of his own experience only, and to acclaim or to condemn according to conformity or non-conformity therewith. He seeks to enlarge his experience, to change it, to modify it, to improve it.

He seeks more knowledge, different knowledge, knowledge which shall profoundly improve his outlook and enrich the quality of his experience. So

actuated he does not care where he has to go to acquire such knowledge, nor how devastating its influence upon him.

He will under no circumstances be dissuaded from seeking by reason of the doubts and difficulties which may ensue during the search. He does not care that his house of being may crumble in ruins round about him, that where heretofore he had certainty and ease, now he has doubt and discomfort. He wants ever-increasing Understanding at all costs, for he knows that until that is his permanent ideal he cannot have either real peace or real wisdom. And he gladly pays the price of doubt and discomfort for truer Understanding to come ; for doubt and discomfort are signs that his erstwhile certainty and ease have not been real certainty and ease, only temporary substitutes, here today but of necessity to be gone tomorrow.

The spirit of the seeker of Understanding is that of one who knows for sure that all that he knows today is but the veriest fragment of Truth. He knows that all about which for the time being he feels so certain must be

challenged sooner or later, and successfully challenged by that doubt which is the herald of the larger Truth, the demolisher of unstable dwellings, the transformer of self-satisfaction into Self-satisfaction.

There is no Understanding where an individual declares he has the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

There is no Understanding where an individual perceives himself to be an oasis of Truth in the midst of a desert of untruth.

There is no Understanding where an individual seeks to substitute his own Truth for another's Truth, where in pride he asserts that his Truth is needed by all in substitution for the Truths which are theirs.

There is no Understanding where an individual remains content where he is, and seeks not to exchange his present prison for a garden—prison though this garden shall some day be, again to be exchanged for a lovelier garden. Discontent, happy and eager, is of the essence of Understanding.




CAMPAIGN FOR
UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING ONESELF

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*We understand what splendid powers we have, what fine opportunities are ours, what glorious certainties impel us irresistibly forward—through deaths, through darkness, through defeats, through dumb despair.*

## UNDERSTANDING ONESELF

If each individual in the world really understood himself, he would understand the world, too.

There are very few individuals who try to understand themselves face to face. Most people allow their understanding of themselves to be done for them by other and appreciative people.

They construct pictures of themselves with the help of traditions, books—possibly Scriptures, persons—possibly Personages.

So they do not know themselves at first-hand, only at second-hand.

It is, of course, better to know oneself at second-hand than not at all. And often other people and books may introduce us to a knowledge of ourselves which as yet we cannot possibly gain for ourselves.

But even a little first-hand knowledge is far more precious than a wealth of second-hand information.

What do we really know about ourselves, even though the knowledge

may be quite unprovable, as much to ourselves as to others ?

We *know* we are immortal. Only when times are dark does this knowledge become temporarily hidden.

We *know* that every cloud encompassing us has a silver lining. A very black cloud will sometimes plunge valley dwellers into despair. But those who live on the mountain summits of life find in black clouds happy occasion for exaltation. And every dweller in a valley shall, as his time comes, lift up his eyes unto the hills, whither he shall ascend.

Adversity heartens the strong, and undermines the impotence of the weak.

We *know* that in the power of our immortality, and in the light which is beyond all darkness, there are no heights too lofty for our conquering, no Peace too exalted for our achievement, no Happiness too glorious for our attainment.

We *know* that such splendours constitute the future of all that lives.

The sooner we know these things, the sooner are we beginning to understand ourselves, even though from time to time the knowledge grows dim and sometimes seems to die away.

We understand what splendid powers we have, what fine opportunities are ours, what glorious certainties impel us irresistibly forward—through deaths, through darknesses, through defeats, through dumb despair.

Thus Understanding becomes inspiration, confidence, courage.

We understand that our physical bodies, our feelings and emotions, our minds, and all the faculties we possess, are means whereby we achieve the noble ends towards which we move.

Our physical bodies may be feeble. We can make the best of them.

Our feelings and emotions may lack purity and selflessness. We can make the best of them.

Our minds may be dull. We can make the best of them.

Our faculties may be negligible. We can make the best of them. We can

use them all to the limits of their limitations. It will not be long before they break down their limitations and enter into freer, fuller and finer living.

We are not bad. We are not wicked. We are not evil. There is nothing the matter with us which cannot be remedied. *We are only ignorant*; and ignorance lessens day by day.

Let us not be afraid, even of that which we think to be worst in us. The very worst, that which we would, perhaps, hide utterly, even that worst is not as bad as we may think it to be in moments of fear and desperation. Even the worst is a good in slow becoming. Let us take courage, for all is really well with us, even though sometimes there be hell with us.

Helplessness and hopelessness are signs of misunderstanding. He who feels that life is not worth living is misunderstanding himself. He who feels he *cannot*, forgets he is a King, one who *can*, as the very word itself connotes.

Understanding makes the slave a free man.

Understanding turns adversity into power—be it adversity of body, of feelings and emotions, of mind, or of any other element of being.

Understanding is to go beneath circumstances into purposes, and to discover that in even the darkest circumstance lies a great opportunity.

Life has no weeds in any kingdom of nature, only flowers.

Understanding sees a flower in the apparent weed.

Understanding sees a God-to-be in every growing creature.

Understanding ourselves, we know that within us lies redemption from ignorance, from sorrow, from death, from adversity.

And such knowledge causes us to learn to value others as we have learned to value ourselves, thus passing from misunderstanding to unfrontiered Friendship, from separateness to Solidarity, from selfishness to Service.




CAMPAIGN FOR
UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING— THE BRIDGE BETWEEN RACES, NATIONS, FAITHS

BY
G. S. ARUNDALE

*Each race, nation, faith, is but an individual writ large, intensified a millionfold and more. Each is a note in a simultaneous sounding of notes—sometimes discordant, but ever moving towards concord.*

## UNDERSTANDING— THE BRIDGE BETWEEN RACES, NATIONS, FAITHS

WHAT is the cause of misunderstanding as between races and as between nations ?

As Charles Lamb would have said, the cause is that they do not really know one another.

We hardly know ourselves. How much less must we know others. All the world's a school and all living creatures in it just students.

Races are divisions in the school, and nations classes in it.

Each one of us likes best the division and class to which he belongs. And if he be young in the division or class, he is sure to think it superior to other divisions and other classes.

He is proud, and up to a certain point rightly proud, of the characteristics of his division and class. He would not care to belong to other divisions and other classes for, he has not yet learned the very lessons membership

of division and class ultimately teaches him—that all Life is One, that there is a great Brotherhood of Life, that all Life springs from the same source and is unfolding to the same goal.

But the Way is the Way of Difference.

As we trace Life backwards to origins, differences fade into unconscious solidarity, and thence into unconscious unity.

As Life moves forwards from origins, the spirit of difference increasingly predominates, and unity and solidarity remain asleep.

We live today largely in the Age of Difference—individual uniqueness, be it of persons, or of nations, or of races. And in the earlier stages of the Age of Difference pride becomes the dominant note, sense of superiority, the self-satisfied desire to convert others into likenesses of ourselves.

In the later stages the spirit of comradeship begins to prevail, the sense of solidarity, respect for others' ways, and the desire to help them where they are.

We become masters of Difference, instead of being its slaves as we needs must when we begin our voyage upon the sea of Difference.

So do we learn to look upon the individuals around us as fellow-travellers—travelling together with us, but differently.

So do we learn to look upon races, nations, religions, other than our own, as fellow-travellers with ours—travelling together with us, but differently.

We learn that these races, nations, religions, are working out their own high purposes, as we know ours are working out theirs.

We learn that they, like ours, are living according to their individual temperaments, genius, needs, destiny.

So do we learn to appraise and to appreciate.

To be quick to condemn discloses an individual as inexperienced in his travelling on the sea of Difference, to be more or less in the earlier stages of his voyaging.

To be slow to condemn discloses an individual as having begun to

assimilate the lessons the voyage is designed to teach.

It is generally true that the mistakes we think we see as characteristic of other races, nations, faiths, have their counterparts in our own countries, our own faiths, our own race.

We are almost, though, perhaps, not quite, as blind to the weaknesses of our own settings as often we are blind to the qualities of the settings in which other individuals are evolving. We have our own superiorities, doubtless. They have theirs. We have our own inferiorities. They have theirs.

We have in race, nation, faith, our own powers and purposes. In their races, their nations, their faiths, they have their own powers and purposes.

Save in the case of obviously backward peoples, there is little to pick and choose among the divisions and classes of the world school.

Each is but an individual writ large, intensified a millionfold and more. A nation, a race, a faith, is a ray become a rainbow. Each is a note in a simultaneous sounding of notes—sometimes

discordant, but ever moving towards concord.

And just as all the individuals in the world, of whatever kingdom of nature, are a Brotherhood, so are all the nations, all the races, and all the faiths, families. There is an international family, an inter-racial family, a family of religions.

We have to learn that Brotherhood is real, whether we honour or dishonour it.

We have to learn that these families are real, though in our actions we often mock at their reality.

The first lesson in this course of learning is Understanding. The second lesson is Appreciation. The third lesson is sincere Friendship.

The purpose of present-day democracy is to teach us, be we individuals, communities, nations, faiths, or races, that we can grow more quickly together than apart, singly.

We learn that peace and prosperity largely depend upon our growing together, and that as we favour isolation, so do we retard our own peace and

prosperity as well as the peace and prosperity of the other members of the Universal Brotherhood, and of the various families to which we belong.

He who seeks to understand finds himself at home in every race, in every nation, in every faith, with every individual.

He who seeks to understand lives to learn, to help, to UNDERSTAND, not to compare derogatorily, nor to go here, there and elsewhere as a missionary, as one who regards himself superior, as one whose mission it is to bring to dark places the light he alone possesses.

He who seeks to understand seeks to be at home everywhere, to make friends everywhere, to give happiness everywhere, and to find happiness everywhere.

Wherever he goes he is keenly interested to understand those differences which so radically, perhaps, differentiate the race, faith or nation, from his own race, faith and nation. He is happy to perceive another colour of the rainbow of differences which constitute the World.

He does not allow his own individual beliefs, conceptions, prejudices, convictions, to establish a rigid conviction. On the contrary, he makes a special point of removing these from the centre of his picture, and of giving hospitable and gracious pre-eminence to the circumstances in which he finds himself.

He is thereby able to avoid that common fault of the narrow and weak-minded—of being *shocked* by the views and behaviour of someone else. To be shocked is to place oneself on a pedestal above those of one's fellows who are not in conformity with one's own outlook upon life, who do not furnish their emotional and mental houses with the same period and type of furniture.

Everywhere he goes, the seeker of Understanding rejoices in the accumulation of experience, and of more and more Truth. He is happy to travel widely and to see the good wherever he goes, for good is everywhere, and also to note what seems to him the not-good, which, after all, is good in the becoming.

How happy is the seeker of Understanding to revel in the glories of faiths other than his own, to appreciate the splendours of nations other than his own, to acknowledge the high purposes of races other than his own. He is no stay-at-home in faith, or nation, or race, even though he may feel them to be his home. He is happy in the homes of others, and adapts himself to their furniture and conveniences.

Sooner or later isolation kills, even though at first it seems to confer strength. Association alone is growing life.

Hence the well-being of the many is essential to the welfare of the one—be this one individual, nation, race or faith.

And well-being is increased only through friendship and understanding, never through suspicion, distrust, or hatred.

To live in peace and prosperity *together* is the call of democracy.

Nevertheless, the failure of an individual, or of a nation, to respond to democracy's call, to live the standard

so far attained by civilization, must now and again be expected.

An individual may need to be restrained in the interests of the State. A nation or nations may need to be restrained in the interests of international peace and justice.

National and International Law must have respect *at all costs.*

National law is enforced because the nation perceives the need for its enforcement. International law is slowly finding honour, but not yet have the means been evolved whereby a nation is restrained from treading a pathway of unrighteousness. We have not yet decided as a Fellowship of Nations what a nation shall and shall not do in terms of international righteousness.

Force still reigns supreme, and Justice must perforce wait until she can come into her own. This she will do the more quickly as we understand, and spread the ideal and practice of Understanding throughout the world.




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING— THE CONQUEROR OF UNHAPPINESS

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*There is nothing more beautiful or more true than to have the power to make ourselves one with another—one with his limitations, with his weaknesses, with his fears, with his anxieties, with his foolishnesses, even with his defeats.*

## UNDERSTANDING—THE CONQUEROR OF UNHAPPINESS

How little real understanding there is in the world, especially towards those who are unhappy—physically, emotionally, mentally.

We look at them from our own points of view, when we should enter into their own states of consciousness, understanding these—giving to each state the influence it actually exercises on the individual.

We try to help them from without, instead of from within. Instead of standing shoulder to shoulder with them in their unhappiness, appreciatively understanding it so that they become immensely thankful for someone who "really understands" and who makes such understanding the very basis of his advice, we are inclined to tell them what they ought to do, and perhaps even commit the foolishness of telling them what we should do were we in their place.

We make them look upon an ideal which is outside them. We ask them

to look upon it and try to approximate to it.

Were we really understanding, we should try to stir into life an ideal which is within them, and help it quietly, almost unconsciously perhaps, to change their unhappiness into happiness.

Were we really understanding, we should take our unhappy brethren just as they are, enter into the spirit of their unhappiness just as it is, and help them just where they are, expecting nothing from them which, with a little effort, they could not give.

Were we really understanding, we should help them along as far as possible at their own pace, guiding them along that which, to them, is the line of least resistance. We should evoke in them their own wills, leaving these to find their own forms and expressions.

Not: "Let me tell you what you ought to do," but: "What do you think is best to do, taking all your circumstances into consideration?"

What most people need in their unhappiness is comradeship, practical

no doubt, but always warm and brotherly. People who are unhappy appreciate more than anything else a sense that they are not alone. Therefore, we must help them by driving away from them this feeling of loneliness, and loneliness recedes before understanding, not before preachings, or admonitions, or disapprovals, or exhortations.

Let us by all means try to guide the unhappy into a strength which shall restore to them their happiness. But before we can effectively guide, we must intimately understand.

There is nothing more beautiful or more true than to have the power to make ourselves one with another—one with his limitations, with his weaknesses, with his fears, with his anxieties, with his foolishnesses, even with his defeats.

When we are thus one with him, when by our comradeship we cause him to lose any shame he may have felt through fear of the censoriousness of those around him, then will he gain that courage which comes from a growing realization of the unity of life.

We shall have helped him to gain that realization, for we shall have added ourselves to him in perfect understanding.

How few there are who are one with those who have physical ill-health. How few physicians know how to become one with the temporarily broken spirit of their patients.

How few there are who are truly one with those who are beset by sorrow, or by fear, or by trouble, or by anxiety. We often help when it would be even better if we understood. Greater help can no man give to another than to understand him. All other help comes afterwards.

The Christian idea of God becoming man is a noble expression of God's understanding of His children.

But if we would thus become one with those who are lonely in darkness as we are so eager to become one with those who are happy in the Light, we too must be willing to know unhappiness, to know darkness, and to discover that the light of happiness shines even in the darkness of unhappiness.

We need not know all darkness, for by the grace of the Unity of Life there is the wondrous Truth of vicarious at-one-ment. But we must know darkness for ourselves, and discover the light in it, so as to learn how to be free in the darkness of others, and show to them the light which shines in it.

When our own unhappiness comes, let us seek out its shining gifts even while we bend before its darkening lacerations.

"There is an hour in the Indian night, a little before the first glimmer of dawn, when the stars are unbelievably clear and close above, shining with a radiance beyond . . . belief . . . The trees stand silent around one with a friendly presence. As yet there is no sound from awakening birds; but the whole world seems to be intent, alive, listening, eager. At such a moment the veil between the things that are seen and the things that are unseen becomes so thin as to interpose scarcely any barrier at all between the Eternal Beauty and Truth and the Soul which would comprehend them."

The world stands to-day in such a night, and men and women half asleep in ignorance, yet troubled with storm and stress about them, are once again stirring into wakefulness, seeking Truth, eager for Light, panting after Wisdom, yearning for Understanding, demanding a Happiness more lasting than the fleeting satisfactions offered by religion, science and civilization.




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# UNDERSTANDING— AS BALANCE

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*Understanding is balance, misunderstanding lack of balance. And the lack of balance so noticeable everywhere soon develops into physical, emotional and mental excess.*

## UNDERSTANDING— AS BALANCE

UNDERSTANDING is specially vital as between the innumerable differences which characterize the unfoldment of the White Light of unconscious Divinity into the rainbow hues of that evolutionary diversity, the purpose of which is to cause Divinity to become self-conscious in all its individual parts.

In this world of differences, there is much to separate us one from another. There is clash of temperament. There is antagonism of principles and purposes. Colours clash as in races. Beliefs clash as in faiths. Temperaments clash as in nations and individuals. Time itself enters the fray as in the clash between youth and age. The kingdoms of nature clash. There is a clash between the sexes.

Everywhere antagonism which is misunderstanding, instead of that recognition of the divine purpose of difference which is Understanding.

In truth, everything dovetails into everything else, as do the pieces of a

jigsaw puzzle. Most of us see but the jagged edges instead of the hollows or prominences into which these jagged edges fit—jagged only until we see where they belong.

And yet, while we strive for Understanding amidst all this diversity, bearing as it does such rich testimony to the splendour of the Universal Light, we must remember and allow for the fact that even misunderstanding has its place and time in the evolutionary process. We may strive for Peace. Yet war has its place in growth, the question being whether it has any place in the human kingdom today.

Let Understanding be our Law, but let us understand misunderstanding.

Understanding is balance. Misunderstanding is lack of balance. And the lack of balance so noticeable everywhere soon develops into physical, emotional and mental excess.

Physical excess is seen in sport as a professional occupation, in the frenzy of crowds during the course of matches, in the vulgar and degrading spectacles

so often associated with sporting events.

Emotional excess is seen in the commercialization and prostitution of sex, in the growing sordidness of the appeals to the emotions in theatre, cinema and newspaper, in the growing craving for emotional stimulation, in the degradation of art, in the emotional license of crowds when irresponsibly stirred to violence and hatred.

Mental excess is seen in the prostitution of brain-power to ignoble purposes, in aggressive and destructive pride and self-satisfaction, in the exaltation of matter at the expense of soul, of form at the expense of life.

There is lack of balance as between man and woman. Instead of the one being complementary to the other, the woman in many parts of the world still remains in a very real sense the chattel of man, and where there should be mutual respect, and above all reverence on the part of the man for the woman, there is a relationship far more often sordid than sanctified.

Only with mutual Understanding will right relationship be restored, and

the sanctity of married life, the grace of mutual courtesy, and the fragrance of chivalry, give to the world a real civilization in exchange for the veneer which passes for civilization to-day.

There is a lack of balance between youth and age. The young do not understand the old. The old do not understand the young. The old flaunt their experience, the young their freedom. The old worship their gods, the young worship themselves, not yet having fashioned any other gods. The old dream, the young imagine.

Hence, an apparent conflict between youth and age—real, perhaps, as to some who are old and as to some who are young.

But where there is Understanding there is neither youth nor age. The old are young because of their Understanding, the young are old because of their Understanding. Kipling's strong men met because each was strong in Understanding. So do age and youth meet—where there is Understanding. And there is no more potent force for peace and happiness than the alliance

between age and youth on the foundations of a perfect understanding that the power of each is the joy of the other.

Age needs all that youth can give it. Youth needs all that age can give it. *Together differently and triumphantly.*

There is lack of balance as regards the different functions which different temperaments perform in the evolutionary process. Each individual cherishes his own particular temperamental expression as superior to all other temperamental expressions.

The artist, unless he be a great artist, not only revels, but wallows, in his peculiar form of art, and feels contempt not only for those who are ordinarily not called artists—though all gods in the becoming are artists—but also for those artists whose technique differs from his.

The intellectual person, unless his intellect be mighty, similarly revels, and also wallows, in his mind. And pride, a power and a weakness of mind, comes subtly to his aid.

The soldier, unless he be a great soldier, no less feels his sense of

superiority, and the priest, too, when he is small of spiritual stature, and the business man, when he, too, does not see God in his work.

It is as if each colour of a glorious rainbow were to be calling every other colour black.

And thus also is it with nations, with races and with faiths. Misunderstanding everywhere, and Understanding needed to restore the balance.

There is a lack of balance in judgment. So often are we too kind to ourselves and too cruel to others.

Perhaps the apotheosis of balance in Understanding is achieved as we seek to place ourselves in the position of the other person before we judge—what would *we* do if we were he, with all the complicated machinery which constitutes him and moves and differentiates him ?

Not what would we do were we to transfer ourselves with all our own constitutive machinery into the situation which confronts him.

In all probability, should I not say—in all certainty, were we he, we should

do as he is doing : what else could we do ? And this fact gives us a wonderful understanding of the forces and motives which lead him irresistibly to the consummation we are watching.

Confronted with the situation which confronts him, we might do otherwise ; and that which we would do might very conceivably be far different from that which someone else would do.

A balanced Understanding takes people where they are, and does not expect from specific premises other than their natural conclusions.

Hence, a balanced Understanding seeks to modify the causes rather than to waste time inveighing against effects.

War is wrong. Let us not spend much time condemning war, but rather discover the causes of war and modify them.

Cruelty is wrong. Let us not spend much time condemning cruelty, but rather discover why cruelty exists and nip it in its bud.

Misunderstanding is wrong. Let us probe down to its roots, rather than inveigh against it and tinker at it on its surfaces.

Prevention is better than cure, and even to cure we must descend to the roots.

We perceive motes all about us and thank God we have them not, though in truth the eyes of each of us have motes no less than beams.

But is not a mote a beam in the becoming ?

What is ugliness but beauty asleep ? What is evil but good asleep ? What is ignorance but wisdom asleep ? What is a savage but a saint asleep ? What is falsehood but truth asleep ? What is dross but gold in the becoming ? What is life but glory growing ? What is the mineral kingdom but the ante-chamber of the vegetable kingdom, the vegetable kingdom but the ante-chamber of the animal kingdom, the animal kingdom but the ante-chamber of the human kingdom, and the human kingdom but the ante-chamber of the Gods ?

What is the static but the dynamic asleep ? What is any crucifixion but the prelude to a resurrection, be the crucifixion just one of the little everyday

worries or some apparently overwhelming disaster? What is anything but a good in the becoming? Growth is ceaseless. Spiritual kingship draws ever nearer. He who understands is utterly content to wait for victory, though never content to give up hope, nor to cease to strive.




CAMPAIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

# CREATIVE UNDERSTANDING

BY

G. S. ARUNDALE

*Understanding must not be merely sympathetic and appreciative. It must also be creative. It must help actively to contribute towards the solution of Life's problems and the clarification of Life's Purpose.*

## CREATIVE UNDERSTANDING

UNDERSTANDING does not merely mean sympathy and appreciation.

Understanding must also be creative. It must help actively to contribute towards the solution of Life's problems and towards the clarification of Life's Purpose.

Hence every individual must not merely seek to *be* understanding, he must also seek to use Understanding in the service of those around him.

In order to do so, the individual himself must cause the light of Understanding to shine in his own dark places, and to clarify and strengthen his own self-realization.

His individuality must be right.

When is individuality growing right?

1. When there is a growing sense of Life as Purpose, of a moving towards a divine, far-off consummation of himself.
2. When the urge to hasten such movement ever gains increasing strength.

3. When there is a growing realization of Law and Order as constituting, with Purpose, Life's essential elements.

4. When there is a growing realization that Life's Purpose can only be achieved as movement becomes increasingly collective instead of isolated.

5. When there is a growing realization that Peace and Happiness ever lie more in movement toward achievement than in the actual achievement itself.

No one is truly a King who is not always conquering.

6. When there is a growing realization that the surest test of right movement lies in an ever-increasing urge to simplify and not to complicate.

7. When there is a growing realization that just as true movement means movement with others, so true achievement means sharing with others.

The individual, having thus sought to minister to his righteousness, may

seek to make his Understanding positive and creative, along the lines most expressive of his individual uniqueness and temperament.

He may seek to cause the light of Understanding to shine in the regions of the three great aspects of Life—Will, Wisdom, Activity-Love.

Let the spirit of Will be purged of Tyranny.

Let the spirit of Wisdom be purged of Pride.

Let the spirit of Activity-Love be purged of Selfishness.

He may either make his Understanding positive in terms of his own Will, his own Thought, his own Emotions, on the non-active plane, in potent meditation, or he may descend to the plane of activity, and seek out Will wherever it is Tyrannous, Wisdom wherever it is infused with Pride, Activity-Love wherever it is infused with Selfishness, and declare the way of release from such impurities.

He may seek to cause the light of Understanding to shine in the various departments of human life :

1. Patriotism without Hatred.
2. Education without Fear.
3. Religion without Intolerance.
4. Industry without Injustice.
5. Art without Ugliness.
6. Leisure without Vulgarity.
7. Health without Cruelty.

He may, for example, concentrate on some special department, say that of Industry, and, while stressing the importance of justice both to employer and to employed, may declare as follows :

1. Healthy Employment.
   Health-giving as to physical body, emotions and mind.
2. Honourable Employment.
   Self-respecting, providing for sickness and old age.
3. Happy Employment.
   Creative, intensifying the sense of the worthwhileness of Life.

He may stress the fact that, similarly, Leisure must be right, just as employment must be right :

1. Healthy Leisure.
   Health-giving, as above.

2. Honourable Leisure.
   Self-respecting.
3. Happy Leisure.
   Creative, refining.

He may enter the department of Education and declare :

1. The first purpose of Education is to cast out fear by releasing Courage.
2. The second purpose of Education is to cast out indifference by releasing Enthusiasm.
3. The third purpose of Education is to cast out ignorance by releasing Wisdom.

He may further declare that the lifelong process of Education should, both as to general unfoldment, and as to every detail, develop in the following stages :

1. Self-Discovery.
   The individual is born to himself.
2. Self-Expression.
   The individual manifests himself.
3. Self-Sacrifice.
   The individual shares himself.

4. Self-Surrender.
   The individual gives himself.
5. Self-Realization.
   The individual fulfils himself.

So that there is self-identification with every aspect of the educational curriculum, the latter being but the individual externalized.

Compare the above stages with the Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, in Christian terminology, and with the Hindu and Buddhist equivalents.

## Ugliness

He may take stand against the prevalence of Ugliness in almost every aspect of present-day life :

1. Cultural.
   The distortion of the Arts and the negation of refinement.
2. Utilitarian.
   The commercial distortion of beautiful objects. Ugliness in advertisements, etc.
3. Behaviourist.
   Distortion in dress, manners habits, home-life speech, etc.

4. Leisure.
   Ugly leisure. Theatrical shows, cinematographs, sports, the defaming of nature.
5. Business.
   Dishonourable competition. Lying advertisements. Sweated labour. Impure ingredients.
6. Politics.
   Graft. Party before State.
7. Sex.
   Commercialization. Degradation, as between man and woman.
8. Education.
   Fear. Cruelty.
9. The Brotherhood of Life.
   The prostitution of the weak to the satisfactions of the strong.
10. Truth.
    The persecution of freedom. Inquisitions into beliefs. The sacrosanctification of doctrines, dogmas, articles of faith.

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Wherever there is Fear and Cruelty, there is Misunderstanding.

Wherever there is Ugliness, there is Misunderstanding.

Wherever there is Injustice, there is Misunderstanding.

Wherever there is Persecution and Intolerance, there is Misunderstanding.

Wherever there is Tyranny, be it by persons, or by principles, or by social status, or by money or any other form of power, there is Misunderstanding.

Let him who seeks to understand himself, to be understanding of others, and to help to cause Understanding to take the place of misunderstanding, remember that

1. There is no Freedom but Honour.
   There is no Duty but Justice.
   There is no Happiness but Truth.
2. No weeds of misunderstanding can abide where grows a flower of Reverence.
3. Where true Liberty is, there is Order.
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